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ABSTRACT

A local model for support of periodic academic program reviews by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) has developed and evolved at the Ball State University library. The process of devising a format to systematically report library holdings statistics to support program reviews and other collections development duties began in 1975; from 1975 to 1979, library holdings for the university's 48 departments were mapped. During the next 5-year ICHE review cycle, additional call numbers and shelf list measurements were added in response to curriculum changes. In 1985 a two-part document was developed for each department to support accreditation reviews. The first part of the document, a library holdings survey for the department, was a quantitative assessment of classified monographs and serials following the Research Library Group Subject Conspectus. The second part was a narrative detailing financial summaries and notable library resources and services, including: related reference works, microform and other non-print collections; course-related library instruction; and interlibrary loan and other document-delivery services. Library staff initiate meetings with each department's chair and interested faculty to obtain feedback relating to these documents or other issues. Significant literature on library support for academic program reviews and accreditation visits is reviewed, and future directions are considered. (KRN)

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LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW - FROM AN EVOLVING LOCAL MODEL TO WHAT'S BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

A methodology used to gather and describe library resources and services for a state accreditation agency and other academic program reviews is discussed. Resulting documentation consists of quantitative collection holdings data, budget support information, and major resources and services. The author calls for state-wide collaboration and more national attention in developing an output measurement model for academic program and accreditation reviews. Support for these reviews is not only a service function of the university libraries, in its ultimate sense, library accreditation reports allow the university libraries to evaluates its effectiveness in meeting user needs and academic goals.

Accreditation teams in higher education evaluate the library as an essential component of collegese and universities in the overall evaluation and accreditation process. However, literature on how libraries support academic program reviews and accreditation visits is scarce.

Background information on this topic is found in Libraries and Accreditation in Institutions of Higher education: Proceedings of a Conference held in New York City, June 26-27, 1980.[1] This source gives an overview of the accrediting process, the evaluation of college and university library standards, and guidelines for different types of institutions (two-year college, four-year college and university). It also includes such topics as a review of current university standards, current use of academic library standards, and the assisted self-study approach to improving academic libraries. Most important of all, it covers evaluation of libraries in the accrediting process from the standpoints of the accrediting association and the library; insights of an accreditation association officer and a team member as to how the evaluation process can be made more effective; and a librarian's perspective for improving the accreditation process.

At the 1988 ALA Conference in New Orleans, Doris Ackerman and Jeanne NcNair of the University of South Florida Libraries presented "USF University Library Generic Model Resources and Service."[2] The 32-page generic model presented is the most

comprehensive example available. At the conclusion of that presentation there was general interest expressed in forming a task force to study this issue, with the aim of developing a standardized reporting format for different library sectors (two year college, four-year college, university). Unfortunately, nothing resulted from this initiative.

Vicki L. Gregory's 1990 article, "The Academic Library in the Program Review Process,"[3] examined the perception of library directors, chief academic officers, and staff members of the state coordinating agencies in selected states concerning the academic library's role in the program review process. Library support for new and/or existing programs in the states studied ranges from a very elaborate procedure to the other extreme of just a simple statement.

This paper describes how a local model for support of periodic academic program reviews by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) has developed and evolved at Ball State University since 1975. Over the years, both the process and formats for this reporting have undergone considerable change and refinement. Library support of academic program reviews has always been an integral function of the Collections Development Division at Ball State University Libraries. Data collected for the ICHE Review of academic departments is often updated for use in reviews for other accrediting agencies.

This model was presented at the 1991 ACRL Research Forum of Indiana Library Federation's Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, with

the hope that further interest at the state, and even national level, would be generated. The dream for a national forum at ALA on this topic, and for a nationally recognized review instrument with measurable standards for various types of academic libraries are the ultimate goals.

At Ball State, the Libraries' initiative and efforts have been rewarded throughout the years. A calendar for the ICHE Reviews of all academic programs on campus is provided by the Provost's Office. Advance notice of any change in the review schedule is often communicated immediately. This proactive approach is an improvement over the past when last minute requests for complex support data were most frequent and matter-of-fact.

Before 1975, there were no formal data gathering and report mechanisms within the University Libraries to support departmental program review/accreditation. Requests for data were handled by the Assistant to the Director of University Libraries, a non-professional without background or training in collection management reports. Technical services librarians helped whenever they could, but it was still not an easy task. In 1975, a half-time professional position was created in Collections Development for this function, with the major task of devising a format to systematically report library holdings statistics to support program reviews and other collections development duties. This function grew, and by 1980 the position became full-time to cope with increasing demands.

From 1975 to 1979, the task of mapping library holdings for all 48 departments on campus was completed. Using course descriptions found in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs as basic guides for these programs, both Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress Classification call number ranges were defined to reflect departmental curricula. Related, interdisciplinary subject areas were also mapped. Parameters for both classification schedules are used for shelf list measurements to obtain monograph and serial title counts pertaining to the departmental subject interests.

During the next five-year ICHE Review cycle, additional LC call number ranges and shelf list measurements were added in response to curriculum changes and new courses found in undergraduate and graduate catalogs since the prior review. The next title count for the various subject collections was compared with the totals for the initial cycle, and a percentage rate of increase was obtained for library holdings classified in LC between the two review cycles.

Quantitative library holdings data for monographs and serials pertaining to departmental subject interests are only one part of library support data any program review/accreditation requires. Additional information, such as budget allocations and expenditures, and various library resources (such as microform, media and government documents), and different services (such as library instruction and interlibrary loan) are often requested. Even with the limited resources in the Collections Development

Division, there are continuing efforts to provide better library support documents for these reviews.

In 1985, a two-part document was developed for each department in support of its ICHE and other accreditation reviews. Part I, a library holdings survey for the department, is a quantitative assessment of classified monographs and serials pertaining to the departments' teaching and research interests. Efforts are made to follow the Research Library Group (RLG) Subject Conspectuses as closely as possible in mapping the collections classified in LC. Since conspectuses are often either too narrow or too incomplete in mapping collections for non-research libraries, local deviations from the LC call number ranges provided by these subject conspectuses are usually necessary. The holdings survey also maps the departments' interdisciplinary subject interests, as they are often unique for local institutional programs.

Part II of the Ball State departmental survey is a narrative detailing financial summaries and notable library resources and services provided to an academic department. The financial summary outlines library materials expenditures for monographs, serials, series, and periodicals from departmental library allocations for the past four to five years, and for approval books and orders selected or generated by collections development librarians paid by library general funds. This document also provides sections on selected reference works in the field (including major abstracts/indexes, bibliographies, dictionaries,

encyclopedias, handbooks, manuals, vocational guides, etc.); and government publications (listing names of selected federal government agencies whose materials are provided to Ball State University Libraries, a partial federal depository library). A section on major microform collections lists research microform collections currently held in Microform Services pertaining to the departmental subject interests. Another section, on educational resources, describes statistical holdings in various non-print formats. Sections on CD-ROM products held, general and course-related library instruction courses offered, and interlibrary loan and document-delivery services through the use of facsimile machine (FAX) are also described. If time permits, collection evaluation is performed by checking standard bibliographies, relevant sections in the 3d edition of Books for College Libraries, and other selective lists. Weeding, preservation, and collection strengthening of selected subjects are also described. Collections Development often coordinates this effort with Reference Services personnel.

After these documents are ready, Collections Development routinely initiates meetings with each department's chair, library representative, and often, interested departmental faculty to obtain feedback and answer questions relating to these documents, or to learn of their concerns on other issues. Information obtained from these meetings is most helpful to re-direct or re-focus future directions and activities in Collections Development. Thus, this library support function is

not just a "paper chase."

The Ball State model used to support program review/accreditation projects the Libraries in a progressive and proactive role within the university community. With library automation advances in the state of Indiana, specifically the State University Libraries Automation Network (SULAN), the possibility for greater resource-sharing and networking is imminent. These will provide academic librarians with greater opportunities and more challenges than ever before. In the near future, most library support data for accreditation reviews will be obtained easier and faster through enhanced management reports tailored to answer local review needs. Then, determining how well library resources and services serve or meet specific program needs will be a far less laborious process.

Antoinette M. Kania's article, "Academic Library Standards and Performance Measures"[4] in the January 1988 issue of College & Research Libraries proposes the future direction for program review/accreditation. Through content-analysis of existing "input" or "process" oriented library standards (such as collections, facilities, access and networking) used by seven regional accreditation commissions of higher education, a new set of measurable "outcome" standards are identified with systems experts' advice.

The advancement of computer technology and new emphasis on accountability have changed the library's old paradigm from ownership to access, and from input and process standards to

outcome standards as the ultimate measurement for library performance. The new "Standards for University Libraries: Evaluation of Performance"[5] was prepared by the ULS University Library Standards Review Committee headed by Kent Hendrickson. It was approved by the ACRL Board at the 1989 Midwinter Meeting, and revises ACRL's 1979 "Standards for University Libraries." The document emphasizes setting goals and objectives, and different factors to be considered in developing goals (budgets, human resources, collections, building resources, services, university-wide cooperation, cooperative programs and responsiveness to change through new technology and experimentation with new information formats as they emerge). "This mechanism should establish identifiable outcomes, both qualitative and quantitative, using agreed-on criteria, and providing appropriate feedback. The process should be continuous rather than unitary, though it must also fit into any process established by the university for self-valuation."[6] A variety of procedures should be used to measure achievement and effectiveness of the university library, such as its budgetary process, annual reports, and accreditation visits.

Therefore, library support for academic program review/ accreditation is not only a service function of the university libraries; in its ultimate sense, library accreditation reports allow the university libraries to evaluates its effectiveness in meeting user needs and academic goals.

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